

A STUDY OF THE READING INTERESTS OF THE NINTH, TENTH,  
AND ELEVENTH GRADE CLASSES OF MOTON  
SCHOOL, BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN LIBRARY SERVICE

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AUGUST 4, 1966

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Everyone who knows how to read will at some time voluntarily engage in the act. Because curiosity is a basic trait of man, the desire to know what is going on in the world might lead to reading newspapers or magazines. Aside from students' class assignments and tests, from time to time, it should be necessary to read such things as application forms, contracts, and correspondence. Not to mention whatever is available when a lazy mood exists.

More than ever before, the significance of reading and its relationship to the successful adjustment of today's youth is being recognized. The vicarious experiences that are gained from reading play a large part in determining the young adult's outlook in every aspect of life.<sup>1</sup> Reading helps to satisfy social, moral, physical, and emotional needs and helps to shape standards and behavior patterns of the future, not to mention its aid to scholastic and vocational success. According to Havinghurst, "... reading puts young

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<sup>1</sup>Nelson B. Henry, "Reading in the High School and College", The Forty-Seven Yearbook of the National Society for the study of Education, Part II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 8.

people in the tradition of their culture and helps them to include in their own achievement the best of what other people have achieved."<sup>1</sup>

The value of reading too, as a form of recreation and enjoyment must not be overlooked. No other single form of entertainment can offer such a variety of diversion since there are books for every preference and for every frame of mind, books that carry thoughts to any place in every conceivable fashion.<sup>2</sup>

Realizing all this, it is no wonder then, that the reading habits and interests of young people are frequently under surveillance. Nor is it surprising that teachers, parents, and librarians are constantly concerned with reading guidance and making available the best books possible at the right time, on every possible subject.<sup>3</sup>

Through the years school librarians have become aware of the fact that books have served in building concepts, influencing behavior, and providing enjoyment. It might be well if young people realized the importance of

<sup>1</sup>Robert J. Havinghurst, "Characteristics, Interests, and Needs of Pupils that Aid in Defining the Value and Scope of the Reading Program - with Special Reference to High Schools and Colleges," Adjusting Reading Programs to Individuals, Edited by William S. Gray. Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 52. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941.), pp. 53-59.

<sup>2</sup>Henry, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>G. Robert Carlson, "The Magic of Bringing Young Adults to Books," Wilson Library Bulletin, XXXIII (October, 1958), 134.

reading from the time they first begin to learn to read, for some may tend to develop negative attitudes toward reading because of various assignments connected with class work. In order to avoid as much as possible the creation of a distaste for books and reading, the librarian can rely upon students' reading interests to increase their desire to read, and to lead them to reading maturity.

Surveys of reading interests serve as a means of determining the kinds of materials to suggest to young adults at various stages of their development. The reading interests that have been studied over the last 50 years show that the interests of young people have remained fairly constant. They show singularly few variations as to geographic locations or types of books preferred at certain stages of the young adult's life. Librarians need to know even the most minute variation from the norm that occurs in their special situation. So by knowing the basic patterns of reading interests, teachers, parents, and specifically the librarian can more shrewdly guess or suggest the book that most meets the needs and interest of individuals.<sup>1</sup> In her book, Blueprints for Better Living,<sup>2</sup> Cleary points out studies which revealed that marked social class differences in the early training of children affected their

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 137.

<sup>2</sup>Florence Damon Cleary, Blueprints for Better Reading (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1957), pp. 17-24.

reading interest and habits. Very little reading was done in lower class homes. Few books were purchased and few subscribed to magazines. Comics and tabloid newspapers were generally read. The culture patterns, sex, age, and intelligence of individuals were more marked during adolescence.<sup>1</sup>

As early as 1921 A. M. Jordan published a summary of ten questionnaire studies of the interests of children in reading. The results varied with the communities and the conditions under which they were made. Nevertheless, they suggested certain general tendencies. It was discovered that boys and girls read more fiction than anything else and liked it better. Girls were generally interested in books of sentiment and daily living. Boys liked books of adventure, history, and biography. But neither boys or girls showed much interest in books about science or travel.<sup>2</sup>

According to Doris Manor who made a study of the reading interests of a selected group of high school students at Central High School in Sylvania, Georgia in 1964, there are a number of factors that influence reading interests. Many studies have shown that a relationship exists between reading interests and intelligence, chronological age, sex,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>William S. Gray, Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), pp. 162-163.

socio-economic background, and the availability of reading materials. However, she concluded that neither educational nor economic status of the students' families effect their reading habits, and that age did not determine the type of reading materials preferred. She also concluded that girls read more than boys.<sup>1</sup>

Several investigators who have studied the newspaper tastes of high school students, state that they readily accept information printed in their local newspaper and that the local newspaper was generally preferred to others. They also found that girls showed a preference for articles about household and domestic news while boys read articles concerning sports and scientific news most often. The comics was the favorite part of the newspaper for boys and girls.<sup>2</sup>

Early investigations show that young adults also read magazines. High school students read about four magazines regularly and about three most frequently. In all grades boys and girls tended to choose the same type of periodical.<sup>3</sup>

Mass media has been found to play a tremendous part

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<sup>1</sup>Doris Arnell Roberts Manor, "A Study of the Reading Interests of a Selected Group of High School Students at the Central High School, Sylvania, Georgia, 1964" (unpublished Master's thesis, School of Library Service, Atlanta University, 1964), pp. 50-54.

<sup>2</sup>Henry, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>Gray, op. cit., p. 23.



as to the quantity and quality of young people's reading. What is brought to reading in the line of experimental background is of utmost importance in determining what is to be gained from it. Therefore, in order to maintain and increase the influence of the printed page, those who are concerned with education and the highest potential development of youth, must be aware of their needs and interests and guide them with sure knowledge of the best in reading.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Brooksville Community and School

Brooksville, Florida is the county seat of one of Florida's oldest and historically famous counties, Hernando. It is widely acclaimed as the home of the tangerine and is located in West Central Florida and bordering the Gulf of Mexico. The soil is rich and generous and the climate is usually mild the year round.

It is serviced by state highways 50, 98, and 41. Transportation to and from Brooksville is made possible by the Greyhound and Trailway Bus Lines. The Atlantic Coast Line and the Seaboard Airline Rail Companies provide excellent service. Air service provisions were extended in 1965.

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<sup>1</sup>Dora V. Smith, "Current Issues Relating to Development of Reading Interests and Tastes," Recent Trends in Reading: Proceedings of the Conference on Reading Held at the University of Chicago, Vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 366.

Seven television channels that include all major networks are available to Brooksville through stations in Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, and Fort Myers. Of these, channel three is an educational channel originating from Tampa. One local radio station, WWJB, affiliated with the Mutual Broadcasting System, serves the county.

Brooksville is the headquarters for the Southwest Florida Water Management Commission and the Coastal Plains United States Agricultural Experiment Station. Most of the people in the area are employed in the production of citrus fruit, rock mining, poultry farming, and the pulpwood industries. Resort business also provides some employment.<sup>1</sup>

According to the 1960 Census,<sup>2</sup> there were 11,205 persons living in Hernando County. Of the total population, 21 per cent or 2,339 were Negroes.

The chief occupations of the Negroes of the community are related to citrus work, rock mining, and pulp wood. Farm laborers, and domestic service are two major types of work. A very small percentage of the Negro people is engaged in professional occupations. Among Negroes there are 32 persons in the teaching profession, two funeral directors, two part-time policemen, eight beauticians, three barbers, and one person with training in the dry cleaning

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<sup>1</sup>U. S., Bureau of the Census, U. S. Census of Population. Florida: General Social and Economic Characteristics, 1960 (Washington: U. S. Department of Commerce, 1961), pp. 11-228.

business.<sup>1</sup> These occupations yield the Negro family a median income of \$1,996.00. The entire population of the county has a median family income of \$3,338.00.<sup>2</sup>

Other than members of the Moton School staff, approximately 80 Negro adults of the community completed high school; 20 attended college but did not graduate; and 4 completed four years of college. It is pointed out in the 1960 Census<sup>3</sup> that the median school years completed by non-white persons 25 years of age and over was 6.7. The median years of school completed by the white population of the community 25 years of age and over was 8.9.

#### Moton School

Moton School in Brooksville serves as a consolidated school, incorporating the first through the twelfth grades. It is in the eastern section of the town. Pupils are transported from Twin Lakes, Mondon Hill, Shady Rest, Mobley Settlement, and Timmons Settlement. The high school department has an enrollment of 262 students in the grades seven through twelve. The elementary department consists of 18 teachers and approximately 583 pupils. Three custodians, 1 secretary, 4 cafeteria workers, and 3 bus drivers

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<sup>1</sup>Self-Study Report, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>U. S. Census, op. cit., p. 11-264.

<sup>3</sup>Self-Study Report, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

serve the entire school, along with a principal and librarian.

The school plant consists of 8 buildings. Two of these are used for the elementary grades and six house the high school. Of the high school buildings, 1 accommodates the library, the home economics suite, and 4 classrooms. In another is found the cafetorium, science department, principal's office, and a workroom. The third building is designed for the physical education department. Then there are three older structures consisting of a total of 15 classrooms. Altogether there are 34 classrooms in the school.

The library is located in a west wing of one of the newer high school buildings. It is centrally located and equally accessible for the third through the twelfth grades. The first and second grade classes are in a building approximately three blocks away.

#### Availability of Reading Materials in the Community

Brooksville and Hernando County have one local newspaper, The Sun Journal, which is published weekly. The Tampa Tribune, St. Petersburg Times, Jacksonville Times, and the St. Petersburg Independent are daily papers that are available in Brooksville. The Sentinel, News Reporter, and Florida Watchman are weekly publications that are also available. All of these newspapers may be obtained through

subscription or purchase from the four drug and the larger grocery stores.

All of the schools in Brooksville provide library services during the school day of the regular school session. The Frederick Eugene Lykes Memorial Library, which was established through an endowment by the Lykes Brothers for public service to the inhabitants of Hernando County does not render services to Negroes. Moton School's library has approximately 4,700 books, of which 3,000 are on the high school level and 1,691 are for the elementary grades.

#### Purpose and Scope

Those concerned with reading of students at the high school level try to relate it to their specific problems. These problems tend to be reflected in the students' voluntary reading choices. A careful study of the students' selections and areas of interest may serve as a guide to parents, teachers, and librarians in leading the young adult to solutions to their problems, to a better understanding of themselves and the world around them, and to a dawning consciousness of literary and life values.<sup>1</sup>

The purposes of **this study were:** (1) to ascertain what is read by a selected group of high school students at Moton High School in Brooksville, Florida; (2) to determine the types of reading they prefer; (3) to show

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, op. cit. , pp. 298-302.

differences in their reading interests according to their ages, their sex, and the economic and educational status of their homes; (4) to determine what sources are used to acquire their reading materials; and (5) to discover the students' purposes for reading.

The information revealed from this investigation of young adults reading habits should be helpful (1) to the school librarian in her efforts to foster new and allied interests that lead to richer and more extensive experiences; (2) in aiding in the selection of reading materials and adapting and planning reading activities; (3) to teachers in their efforts to stimulate interest in reading and in correlating it with other subjects; and (4) to the parents who are interested in creating a taste for good books within their children.<sup>1</sup>

#### Methodology

The 58 students used in this survey were elected from the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade registration lists of the home room instructors. Those listed with uneven numbers were chosen for study. There were 12 boys and eight girls selected from the ninth grade, nine boys and eight girls selected from the tenth grade, and 14 boys and seven girls were chosen from the eleventh grade.

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<sup>1</sup>Manor, op. cit., p. 5.

A questionnaire taken from the theses of Doris Manor<sup>1</sup> was distributed to the students for study. It was administered by the librarian at Moton School on Tuesday, February 22, 1966. The principal gave permission for the students to assemble in the library for this purpose during the fifth period of the day. Three students who were selected for the study were absent on the first day that the questionnaire was given. They were given the questionnaire on the following day during the second period in the librarian's office.

The questionnaire was designed to obtain data about (1) the students' reading interests, (2) the educational and economic status of their parents, (3) what books, newspapers, and magazines students read and enjoyed most, (4) if books, newspapers, and magazines were being purchased by the parents; from what sources students were obtaining books, magazines, newspapers; (5) their purposes for reading. The socio-economic status of students was determined by the material possessions education and employment of their parents. The items in question concerned homes, cars, telephones, television sets, radios, washing machines, and record players. The results of the study are examined and explained in the next chapter.

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<sup>1</sup>Manor, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

## CHAPTER II

### A DESCRIPTION OF THE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND THE READING INTERESTS AND HABITS OF THE SELECTED GROUP

This chapter gives a personal description of the students who were selected for this study of reading interests and habits. It presents information regarding their ages, grades, and sex, as well as data pertaining to the educational and economic status of their parents. Reading interests and habits were studied as regards magazines, newspapers, and books. Sources from which students acquired these magazines are also included.

#### Personal Traits and Socio-Economic Status of the Students Composing the Sample

##### Personal Characteristics

There were 58 students comprising the sample for this study, 23 girls and 35 boys. There were 12 boys and 8 girls from the ninth grade, 9 boys and 8 girls from the tenth grade, and 14 boys and 7 girls from the eleventh grade (see Table 1).

The ages of the students ranged from 14 to 17 years for those in the ninth and from 14 to 16 for those in the tenth grade. The students in the eleventh grade were from 16 to 20 years old. Of the 20 ninth graders, 11 were 14 years



TABLE 1  
SEX DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDENTS  
BY GRADES

Grades	Male	Female	Total
Ninth	12	8	23
Tenth	9	8	17
Eleventh	14	7	21
Total	35	23	58

old, 5 were 15, 2 were 16, and 2 were 17 years old. Of the 17 tenth grade pupils the youngest was 14, 7 were 15, and 9 were 16 years of age. There were 8 students in the eleventh grade who were 16 and 17 years old respectively. 3 pupils were 18, 1 was 19, and 1 was 20 years of age (see Table 2).

TABLE 2  
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDENTS  
BY GRADES

Grade	Years of Age							Total
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
Ninth	11	5	2	2	...	...	...	20
Tenth	1	7	9	...	...	...	...	17
Eleventh	...	...	8	8	3	1	1	21
Total	12	12	19	10	3	1	1	58

## Socio-Economic Status of Parents and Guardians

Educational status.--Of the 58 students comprising the sample, 34 or 58.6 per cent lived with both parents, and 14 or 24.1 per cent lived with their mother. Less than 20 per cent of the students lived with their father, grandparents, or guardians (see Table 3). The pupils were given questions regarding the last grade of school completed by their parents or guardians, in order to determine whether the educational status of the parents had any effect upon the students' reading interests and habits. The students' cumulative records were also used to obtain this information because many of the pupils were not aware of the last grades of school completed by their parents.

TABLE 3  
RELATIONSHIP OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Relationship	Number of Parents	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Both parents	68	34	58.6
Mother	14	14	24.1
Grandparents	6	3	5.2
Guardians	4	4	6.9
Father	3	3	5.2
Total	95	58	100.0

The cumulative records and responses of about two-thirds of the students revealed that of the 95 parents and guardians 12 or 12.6 per cent had elementary school training, 14 or 14.7 per cent had junior high school training, 29 were on the high school level, three had attended college, and two were college graduates. The educational levels of the remaining 35 parents and guardians were undetermined (see Table 4).

TABLE 4  
SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EDUCATION  
OF THE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Educational Characteristics	Number	Per Cent
Elementary school training	12	12.6
Junior high school training	14	14.7
High school training	29	30.6
Some college training	3	3.2
College graduates	2	2.1
Undetermined	35	36.8
Total	95	100.0

Occupations.--The parents and guardians of the students were employed primarily as domestic workers, rock miners and citrus workers. Specifically, there were 15 men employed in the rock mines, 9 worked with citrus, 4 worked on railroads and 2 were barbers. The remaining males were employed as mechanics, truck drivers, bus drivers, repairmen, farmers, and common laborers. The main area of employment for the females was as domestic workers. Twenty-two or 23.2 per cent worked in this capacity. 3 women worked as cooks, 3 were teachers, and 1 was employed as a clerk. Thirteen or 13.7 per cent of the women were housewives. There was a total of 32 women and 40 men employed. 10 or one fifth of the 50 male guardians were reported as unemployed (see Table 5).

TABLE 5

## AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT OF THE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Types of Work	Sex		Total	Per Cent
	Male	Female		
Domestic workers	...	22	22	23.2
Rock miners	15	...	15	15.8
Unemployed	10	...	10	10.5
Housewives	...	13	13	13.7
Citrus workers	9	2	11	11.7
Laborers	4	...	4	4.2
Railroad workers	4	...	4	4.2
Cooks	...	3	3	3.2
Teachers	...	3	3	3.2
Barbers	2	...	2	2.1
Truck drivers	1	...	1	1.0
Clerks	...	1	1	1.0
Mechanics	1	...	1	1.0
Bus drivers	2	...	2	2.1
Repairment	1	...	1	1.0

Economic status of the 58 families.--In order to obtain information about the economic status of the families of the students, the students were asked about the number of some specific items found in their home. These included the ownership of homes, cars, television sets, radios, washing machines, telephones, and record players.

Of the 58 families represented in the study, 42 or 72.4 owned their own homes and automobiles. Practically all of the families owned television sets, washing machines, and radios. Telephones were found in the homes of 45 or 77.5 per cent of the families (see Table 6).

TABLE 6  
POSSESSIONS OF THE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Possessions	Number of Owners	Per Cent of Owners
Television sets	56	96.5
Radios	55	84.8
Washing machines	53	91.3
Record players	50	86.2
Telephones	45	77.5
Cars	42	72.4
Homes	42	72.4

The students composing the sample were also queried about the exact number of cars, television sets, record players, telephones, and radios owned by their families. The students' responses showed that as many as four families owned three cars and one family owned four automobiles. There were three television sets in the homes of four families, while nine families had two sets. Two families had three record players in their homes and nine had two. The majority of the families, 53 out of 58, had a washing machine and 19 homes had two telephones. Six families possessed three radios and two families owned as many as four (see Table 7).

TABLE 7  
NUMBER OF SPECIFIC ITEMS FOUND IN THE HOMES

Possessions	Number Owned				Total
	1	2	3	4	
Homes	42	...	...	...	42
Cars	29	8	4	1	42
Television sets	43	9	4	...	56
Record players	39	9	2	...	50
Washing machines	53	...	...	...	53
Telephones	26	19	...	...	45
Radios	34	13	6	2	55

TABLE 8

STUDENTS WHO REPORTED PARENTS AND GUARDIANS  
PURCHASING MAGAZINES FOR THE HOME,  
BY GRADE

Parents	9	Grades		Total
		10	11	
Buyers	8	8	8	24
Non-Buyers	12	9	13	34
Total	20	17	21	58

Magazines read and enjoyed most.--Twenty-eight magazines were listed as favorites of the students comprising the sample. Look magazine was reported as the most popular of those read by the students with 16 of the 55 responses listing it. Life and Ebony follow in popularity with 14 and 13 responses respectively. All three of these publications contain many pictures. Look and Life are weeklies and Ebony is a monthly publication which concerns itself primarily with the Negro. Time ranks fourth as a favorite with eight responses and is followed by McCall's with seven responses. All of these magazines were listed by some pupils as being found in the home (see Table 9).

Sources for obtaining magazines.--The students were asked to name the sources from which they obtained the magazines they read. Their responses showed that 18 or 32.7 per cent of the 55 readers purchased magazines from the

TABLE 9  
MAGAZINES READ AND ENJOYED MOST

Magazines	Number of Readers
Look .....	16
Life .....	14
Ebony .....	13
Time .....	8
McCall's .....	7
Boy's Life .....	5
Jet .....	5
Seventeen .....	5
Saturday Evening Post .....	4
Sports Illustrated .....	4
Glamour .....	3
True Story .....	3
In .....	2
Outdoor Life .....	2
Teens .....	2
Others .....	1
Total .....	94



TABLE 10  
SOURCES FROM WHICH STUDENTS OBTAINED  
THE MAGAZINES THEY READ

Sources	Number	Students	Per Cent
Purchased from stores, newsstands	18		32.7
School library	36		65.4
The home	14		25.4
From relatives	3		5.4
From school home economics department	1		1.8

drugstores, groceries, and newsstands; 36 or 65.4 per cent read magazines in the school library; 14 or 25.4 per cent read magazines that came into their homes; three or 5.4 per cent got their magazines from relatives; while one student read magazines found in the home economics department of the school (see Table 10).

#### Newspapers

The questionnaire given to the students used in the sample queried them as to (1) whether they read newspapers, (2) what newspapers they read and enjoyed most, (3) what magazines were subscribed to for the home, and (4) from what sources the newspapers that they read were obtained.

Readers and non-readers. --Of the 58 students

comprising the sample, 51 read the newspapers and 7 did not. Thirty-two of the readers were boys and 19 were girls. Three males and 4 females were non-readers. According to grades and ages, there were six 14 year old boys in the ninth grade who were readers, two 15 year olds, and two 17 year olds. The two non-reading boys were ages 15 and 16 respectively. The female readers in the ninth grade consisted of four 14 year olds, and one 15 year old. The non-reading girls were ages 14, 15, and 16.

All of the tenth grade males read the newspapers; one was 14 years of age, three were 15, and five were 16 years old. All of the tenth grade girls were readers also. There was four 15 year old girls and four 16 year olds.

In the eleventh grade, it was revealed that 13 males read the newspapers. They included two 16 year olds, seven 17 year olds, three 18 year olds, and one 20 year old boy. The eleventh grade girls consisted of five 16 year olds who read, and one 17 year old. The non-newspaper reader was 19 years of age (see Table 11).

Buyers and non-buyers.--Responses to queries regarding whether newspapers were purchased by parents and guardians for the home indicated that 16 of the ninth graders' parents purchased newspapers for the home and four families did not. Fifteen of the 17 tenth graders's parents or guardians subscribed to newspapers and 17 of the 21 eleventh graders' parents subscribed to newspapers.

TABLE 11

## STUDENTS WHO READ NEWSPAPERS, BY AGES AND GRADES

Ages	Ninth Grade				Tenth Grade				Eleventh Grade				Total
	Readers		Non-Readers		Readers		Non-Readers		Readers		Non-Readers		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
14	6	4	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12
15	2	1	1	1	3	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	12
16	...	...	1	1	5	4	...	...	2	5	1	...	19
17	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	1	...	...	10
18	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	3
19	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
20	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Total	10	5	2	3	9	8	...	...	13	6	1	1	58

There was a total of 48 families who subscribed to newspapers for the home and 10 were non-subscribers (see Table 12).

TABLE 12  
NEWSPAPERS READ AND ENJOYED MOST

Newspapers	Number of Readers
Tampa Tribune	40
Brooksville Sun Journal	15
St. Petersburg Times	10
Tampa Times	4
Total	69

Sources for obtaining newspapers.---Sources listed by the respondents from which they obtained newspapers were the school library, publishers, stores, newsstands, relatives, and home. Thirty-one or 60.7 per cent of the 51 readers got their newspapers through subscription; 17 or 33.3 per cent purchased them from stores and newsstands; 12 or 23.5 per cent read the newspapers in the school library; while one student read the newspapers at the home of a relative. (see Table 13)

Books read by the 58 students.---The students were asked to name the titles of the books they had read during the school year. The boys had read 74 titles and 49 were

TABLE 13  
SOURCES FROM WHICH NEWSPAPERS WERE OBTAINED

Sources	Number	Students Per Cent
Subscription	31	60.7
Purchased	17	33.3
School library	12	23.5
Borrowed from relatives	1	1.9

read by the girls. The majority of the books listed were read by the tenth grade students who listed 44 titles. The ninth grade ranked second with 41 titles, and the eleventh grade pupils ranked third, having read 38 books during the school year (see Table 14).

TABLE 14  
NUMBER OF BOOKS READ BY THE STUDENTS  
DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

Grade	Male	Female	Total
Ninth	28	13	41
Tenth	21	23	44
Eleventh	25	13	38
Total	74	49	123

The students' responses showed that of the 123 books that were read, 48 had been read within the last month. The ninth graders indicated that they had read 18 books, five of these were read by the girls and 13 by the boys. The tenth grade students read 19 titles and 12 of these were read by the female students and seven were read by the males. During the past month, the eleventh grade pupils had read 11 titles and the boys had read six while the girls indicated that they had read five books (see Table 15).

TABLE 15

NUMBER OF BOOKS READ BY THE STUDENTS DURING  
JANUARY, 1966, BY GRADE AND SEX

Grades	Male	Female	Total
Ninth	13	5	18
Tenth	7	12	19
Eleventh	6	5	11
Total	26	22	48

Readers and non-readers of books.--There was a total of 27 male students who reported that they read books and eight who did not. Twenty-two females read books and one did not. The males who read in the ninth grade consisted of one 16 year old, five 14 year olds, three 15 year olds, and one 17 year old. One 17 year old, and 14 year old did not read books. In the tenth grade, one 14 year old, three

15 year olds and five 16 year olds read, and there was no non-readers. In the eleventh grade the students who read consisted of one 16 year old, four 17 year olds, two 18 year olds, and one student who was twenty years of age. The non-readers consisted of one 18 year old, three 17 year olds, and two pupils 16 years of age (see Table 16).

TABLE 16

## STUDENTS THAT READ BOOKS, BY AGE, GRADE AND SEX

Ages	Ninth Grade				Tenth Grade				Eleventh Grade				Total
	Readers		Non-Readers		Readers		Non-Readers		Readers		Non-Readers		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
14	5	5	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12
15	3	1	...	1	3	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	12
16	1	1	...	...	5	4	...	...	1	5	2	...	19
17	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	4	1	3	...	10
18	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	1	...	3
19	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
20	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Total	10	7	2	1	9	8	...	...	8	6	7	...	58

The girls in the sample revealed that in the ninth grade, there were one 15 year old, one 16 year old, and five 14 year olds who read, with one 15 year old who had read no books. All of the tenth grade girls read books. Four of the girls were 15 years old and four were 16 years of age. All of the eleventh grade girls also read books and they included five 16 year olds, one 17 year old, and one girl 19 years of age (see Table 16).

Favorite types of stories. --The students were given a list of types of stories and told to select their first, second, and third choices from them. Adventure and sports stories were the most popular first choices. Of the 22 females who read, nine chose love and romance as their first choice for reading and five as second and third. As first and second choices, adventure were selected by six girls and by one as a third choice. Biography was selected by one student as first and second choice and by two students as third choice. Career stories were chosen by two females as a first choice, by three as a second choice, and by four girls as a third preference for reading. Science-fiction, how-to-make-things, and mystery and detective stories were made first, second, and third choices by a small number of students. Fairy tales and humor appeared only once in second and twice in third place.

Of the 27 male readers, sports was selected by 12 as a first choice for reading, by five boys as a second choice, and by four as a third choice. Adventure was placed first by six students and in third place by one person.



TABLE 17

## FAVORITE TYPES OF STORIES PREFERRED BY THE 49 BOOK READERS

Types of Stories	First Choice		Second Choice		Third Choice		Total
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Love and Romance	1	9	5	5	2	5	27
Adventure	6	6	...	6	1	1	20
Biography	...	1	6	1	...	2	10
Career stories	6	2	7	3	4	4	26
Science Fiction	...	1	...	1	...	2	4
Mystery and detective	1	1	1	1	5	1	10
Sports	12	...	5	3	4	2	26
How-to-make-things	...	2	1	2	1	3	11
Fairy tales	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Cowboy and westerns	...	...	...	...	5	...	5
Animals	1	...	1	...	4	...	6
Humor	...	...	1	...	1	1	3
Total	27	22	27	22	27	22	...

## CHAPTER III

## SUMMARY

Brooksville, Florida is an agricultural and industrial town, the seat of Hernando County, and located in West Central Florida near the Gulf of Mexico. Its population of 11,205 consists of 2,339 or 21 per cent Negroes. Most of the Negroes are farm laborers and domestic workers who earn for their families an annual income of \$1,996 (median) as compared to the \$3,338 of white families. Except for the school teachers in Brooksville, only four Negroes have finished college, 20 have had some college education, and 80 finished high school.

The Moton School served only Negro pupils in 1965. It has 34 classrooms spread over eight buildings. As the Negro child ceases to go to school in Brooksville he is cut off from the only library he knows. An endowed "public" library here does not serve Negroes and there is no tax supported one.

The purpose for conducting this study was to determine the reading interests of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade pupils of the Moton School in Brooksville, Florida. It attempted (1) to ascertain what is read by a selected group of 58 high school students at Moton School; (2) to

determine the types of reading they prefer; (3) to show differences in their reading interests according to their age, their sex, and the material possessions and educational status of their families; (4) to determine what sources are used to acquire their reading materials; and (5) to discover the students' purposes for reading.

The necessary information was obtained by means of a questionnaire which was administered to the selected group in Moton School's library, by the librarian, on February 22, 1966, during the fifth period of the day (see Appendix).

The sample consisted of 58 students, 35 males and 23 females. Their ages ranged from 14 to 20. The bulk of the group was between 15 and 17 years old, however, three were 14, two were 19, and one was 20 years old. A few more than half of these young people came from homes with two parents and nearly a fourth of them lived with the mother only. It was impossible to ascertain the educational level of the parents or guardians of these children because almost a third of the pupils did not provide this information on the questionnaire. There is nothing to indicate that some of these persons may have had no schooling, however, one fifth of those about whom information was given had only some elementary school education. Most of the female parents or guardians were domestic workers and three were teachers. A fifth of the male parents or guardians were unemployed and two barbers and one mechanic represented the skilled trades.

Nearly two thirds of the parents owned their homes and such acquirements as television sets, record players, radios, and washing machines were to be found in most of them. Automobiles were owned by 72.4 per cent of them. In many homes two and even three radios, record players, television sets, and cars were to be found.

Reading Interests and Habits of the  
Students Comprising the Sample

Magazines.--Practically all of the students reported that they read magazines. In each grade there was one person who did not do this, but 33 boys ranging in age from 14 to 20 year, and 20 girls ranging in age from 14 to 17 years, indicated that magazines were the first preference of reading for the majority of the students composing the sample. The availability of magazines in the school library may well have influenced the students' preferences, since 36 of the pupils listed the library as their main source for obtaining them. Twenty-four families subscribed to magazines for the home.

Newspapers.--Local newspapers were the second choice for reading by the students. A total of 51 out of 58 read newspapers. Thirty-two of these were boys whose ages ranged from 14 to 20 years, and 19 girls whose ages ranged from 14 to 17 years of age. Forty-eight of the readers' parents purchased newspapers for the home. One child noted that such reading material was borrowed from relatives.

Books.--The students were less interested in reading books than in reading newspapers and magazines and they averaged about one book per month. Of the 58 pupils used in the sample, 49 had read a book during the school year. Twenty-seven males whose ages were from 14 to 20 years, and 22 females whose ages were from 14 to 19 years, were readers. It was noted that the boys read more books than girls, and that eleventh graders tended to read fewer books than those in grades nine and ten.

Sports was the preferred subject with the boys and the girls chose love and romance as their most popular reading category. The girls preferred adventure, science fiction, mysteries, and sports as a second choice for reading. The boys listed adventure, and career stories as second preferences and gave little regard to biographies and cowboy stories. On the other hand biography was one of the types of books listed as favorites actually read by the students.

Sources for obtaining reading materials.--The readers of magazines, newspapers, and books gave eight sources through which they acquired reading materials. These sources were: (1) the school library, (2) subscriptions (3) stores and newsstands, (4) relatives, (5) the home economics department of the school, (6) home libraries, and (7) loans from friends.

The school library was the main source for obtaining magazines and subscriptions were the second ranking source. Twenty-four families subscribed to magazines. Newspapers

Were to be found in practically all of the children's homes.

## APPENDIX

## READING INTERESTS AND HABITS

A Questionnaire

Grade\_\_\_\_\_ Age\_\_\_\_\_ Sex: Male\_\_\_\_\_ Female\_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you like to read? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you read magazines? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
3. What magazines do you read and like most?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Where do you get the magazines that you read?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Do your parents or guardians buy or subscribe to any magazines for the home? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_. If the answer is "yes", name the magazine or magazines.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you read the newspapers? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_.
7. What newspapers do you read and enjoy most?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Where do you get the newspapers or newspaper that you read?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Do your parents or guardians buy a newspaper for the home? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_. If so, what newspaper or newspapers?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Have you read any books within the last month? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_. If so, name the books that you read.\_\_\_\_\_

If you have not read any books within the last month, name the books you have read since the beginning of the 1965-1966 school term. \_\_\_\_\_

11. From the following list of reading categories, indicate your favorite type of story. Place "1" by your first choice, "2" beside your second choice, and "3" beside your third choice.

Adventure \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sports \_\_\_\_\_  
 Career \_\_\_\_\_  
 Animal \_\_\_\_\_  
 Humor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Biography \_\_\_\_\_

Mystery and Detective \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cowboy and Western \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fairy Tales \_\_\_\_\_  
 How-to-Make-Things \_\_\_\_\_  
 Love and Romance \_\_\_\_\_  
 Science Fiction \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you read books other than your text books? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Where do you get the books that you read?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
14. Why do you read? \_\_\_\_\_

#### HOME STATUS

15. Do your parents or guardians own their home? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Do your parents or guardians own a car? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_. How many? \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Do your parents or guardians own a television? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_. How many? \_\_\_\_\_.
18. Do your parents or guardians own a record player?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_. No \_\_\_\_\_. How many? \_\_\_\_\_.
19. Do you have a washing machine at home? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_.
20. Do you have a telephone in your home? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_.
21. Do your parents own a radio? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Now \_\_\_\_\_. How many? \_\_\_\_\_.
22. Who do you live with? What kind of work do they do and what was their last grade in school?



	<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Last Grade in School</u>
Both parents_____	_____	_____
Mother _____	_____	_____
Father_____	_____	_____
Grandparents_____	_____	_____
Guardians_____	_____	_____

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